

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 05946 180945Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /052 W

-----097391 180948Z /20

O R 180917Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5144

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5946

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: FURTHER DETAILS ON RELEASE OF EM-9 PRISONERS

REF: SEOUL 5922 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ROKG RELEASE OF SOME EM-9 VIOLATORS AN IMPORTANT STEP. FUTURE RELEASES ARE LIKELY BUT WILL PROBABLY BE STRETCHED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AS ROKG TESTS REACTION.

END SUMMARY.

1. REFTTEL REPORTED NAMES OF 14 EM-9 PRISONERS RELEASED BY ROKG ON JULY 17. GROUP INCLUDED TWO MYONGDONG PRISONERS (ONE PRIEST AND ONE MINISTER), SIX UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, ONE UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE, ONE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, TWO FARMERS AND TWO MEN LISTED AS UNEMPLOYED. RELEASE EFFECTED BY DECLARATION BY PROSECUTOR OF SUSPENSION OF EXECUTION OF SENTENCE. IN ESSENCE, PRISONERS ARE SERVING TERMS OUTSIDE OF JAIL, AND PROSECUTOR MAY ORDER THEM BACK TO PRISON AT HIS DISCRETION AT ANY TIME TO SERVE REMAINDER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 05946 180945Z

OF TERMS.

2. MEDIA REACTION HAS BEEN CONTROLLED BY GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION KIM SEONG JIN TO EDITORS DAY BEFORE RELEASE. STORIES WERE LIMITED TO FOUR COLUMN HEADLINE WITH NO PHOTOS. DOMESTIC MEDIA WERE TO FOLLOW HAPTONG MATERIAL, AVOID ACCOUNTS FROM FOREIGN

PRESS SOURCES, AND OMIT SPECULATION ABOUT U.S. PRESSURE. PAPERS WERE TO OMIT COMMENTS BY RELEASED PRISONERS AND AVOID SPECULATION ON THE LIFTING OF THE EMERGENCY MEASURES. LOCAL MEDIA WERE, HOWEVER, PERMITTED TO PUBLISH ROKG AND POLITICAL PARTY STATEMENTS. EDITORS WERE TOLD THAT THEIR ADHERENCE TO THESE DIRECTIVES WOULD ENHANCE POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RELEASES OF PRISONERS,

3. COMMENTING ON RELEASE FOREIGN MINISTER PAK TONG JIN TOLD AMBASSADOR JULY 18 THAT EVENT WAS ACTUALLY PLANNED TO TAKE PLACE EARLIER BUT WAS POSTPONED BECAUSE OF UNDER SECRETARY HABIB'S VISIT. FONMIN WENT ON TO INDICATE THAT FURTHER RELEASES ARE CONTEMPLATED DEPENDING ON HOW FREED PRISONERS AND THEIR ASSOCIATES REACT. PAK SAID HE HAD A VERY GOOD FEELING ABOUT THIS TURN OF EVENTS AND THOUGHT IT BODED WELL FOR FUTURE. HE UNDERScoreD NECESSITY FOR CONTINUING TO DEPICT RELEASE AS RESPONSE TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND OTHER DOMESTIC RATHER THAN FOREIGN PRESSURE. HE SAID HE HAD WORKED HARD FOR PRISONERS RELEASE AS HAD KCIA DIRECTOR. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THEY WOULD GO FORWARD BUT CAUTIONED THAT THEY WOULD BE GRADUAL, POSSIBLY EXTENDING OVER SEVERAL MONTHS AND CALLED FOR PATIENCE.

4. ALTHOUGH SOME HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WERE DISAPPOINTED AT SMALL NUMBER OF PERSONS RELEASED, MOST WERE ENCOURAGED SINCE THE FELT THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP WHICH WOULD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 05946 180945Z

BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER RELEASES. CHURCH CIRCLES HAVE RECEIVED CALLS FROM ROKG AUTHORITIES AND FROM NDP LEADER YI CHOL SEUNG DESIGNED TO ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT IN GETTING A NUMBER OF PRISONERS TO SIGN STATEMENTS OF "REFLECTION" IN ORDER TO FACILITATE FURTHER RELEASES. WHILE CHURCHMEN RELAIZE THAT SOME PRISONERS FEEL CONSCIENCE BOUND NOT TO BETRAY THEIR CAUSE BY SIGNING SUCH DOCUMENTS, THEY TAKE THE ROKG EFFORTS AS A SIGN THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS IN FACT INTERESTED IN FREEING THE POLITICAL PRISONERS. KNCC SOURCES BELIEVE THERE IS HOPE THAT SOME MYONGDONG PRISONERS MIGHT BE ABLE TO SIGN OR PERMIT OTHERS SUCH AS FAMILY OR LAWYERS TO SIGN DOCUMENTATION WHICH THE ROKG WILL ACCEPT AS SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT THEIR RELEASE.

5. FEW OPPOSITONISTS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT KIM TAE-CHUNG WILL TAKE ANY ACTION TO FACILITATE HIS OWN RELEASE. SOURCES CLOSE TO KIM CLAIM THAT IT WOULD BE POLITICAL SUICIDE ON HIS PART TO COMPROMISE IN ANY WAY. REPORTEDLY KIM HAS ALREADY FLATLY REJECTED ROKG OVERTURES. KIM'S CAMP FEELS THAT THE ROKG CANNOT ESCAPE CRITICISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH KIM STILL IN JAIL AND THAT, SINCE THE ROKG IS IN AN INTOLERABLE INTERNATIONAL POSITION BECAUSE OF ITS POOR IMAGE, IT WILL EVENTUALLY RELEASE HIM WITHOUT CONDITION.

6. COMMENT: ROKG WILL MONITOR REACTION OF OPPOSITION AND DOMESTIC STABILITY AS IT WEIGHS FREEING MORE PRISONERS. THE PROCESS WILL ALSO BE COMPLICATED BY HARD BARGAINING AS THE ROKG PRESSES FOR "SIGNS OF REPENTANCE" ON THE PART OF PRISONERS TO SAVE FACE AND AS THE PRISONERS RESIST IN THE NAME OF PRINCIPLE AND, IN KIM TAE-CHUNG'S CASE, OUT OF REGARD TO FUTURE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE.
SNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PRISONERS, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SEOUL05946
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770254-0887
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770747/aaaabodq.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 77861d68-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SEOUL 5922
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1828537
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER DETAILS ON RELEASE OF EM-9 PRISONERS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/77861d68-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009